

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9031

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NY

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBJECT: AUGUST 9 SYRIAN MEDIA REPORTS RENEWED OUTBREAK
OF FIGHTING IN LEBANON AND SARG DETERMINATION TO IMPLEMENT
CEASEFIRE

1. SYRIAN MEDIA CONCENTRATING ON NEW SARG CABINET AND
CONSEQUENTLY DOWNPLAYING EVENTS IN LEBANON. MEDIA
REPORTED VIOLENT CLASHES IN MOST LEBANESE REGIONS AND
POSTPONEMENT FOR SECOND SUCCESSIVE DAY OF FURTHER
EVACUATION OF TELL ZAATAR WOUNDED. PRESS CITED SUPPORT
OF KUWAITI CABINET FOR SYRO-PALESTINIAN ACCORD, AND
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AMMAN PRESS ASSERTION THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF ACCORD

ONLY WAY OUT OF FIGHTING.

2. PREVIOUS DAY'S DAMASCUS RADIO COMMENTARY NOTED INITIAL DIFFICULTIES IN PUTTING CEASE-FIRE INTO EFFECT BUT INDICATED SYRIAN BELIEF THAT IT WOULD ULTIMATELY GAIN RESPECT OF WARRING PARTIES. TODAY'S COMMENTARY CITED CONTACTS AMONG DIFFERENT FACTIONS AS INDICATION OF SOME POLITICAL PROGRESS. COLUMNIST EXPRESSED DISMAY AT PERCEIVED IRAQI-EGYPTIAN EFFORTS TO UNDERMINE INITIATIVES LEADING TO POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. THEIR OPPOSITION TO DAMASCUS ACCORD AND THEIR USE OF IRAQI MERCENARIES IN LEBANON "REVEALS ROLE ENTRUSTED TO THEM BY AMERICA AND ZIONISTS IN PLOT TO LIQUIDATE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT." COLUMNIST URGED PALESTINIANS TO REMEMBER EGYPTIAN ACCEPTANCE OF SINAI AGREEMENT, "THROUGH WHICH EGYPTIAN REGIME WASHED ITS HANDS OF PALESTINE ISSUE." ANOTHER COLUMNIST NOTED THAT DAMASCUS ACCORD CONCENTRATED ON MEASURES TO OBTAIN AND SECURE CEASE-FIRE, AND NOTED THAT OBSERVANCE OF CEASE-FIRE CONSTITUTES BASIS FOR TESTING INTENTIONS OF ALL PARTIES.

3. COMMENT: MEDIA PREOCCUPATION WITH NEW CABINET PROBABLY PART OF CONSCIOUS POLICY TO DRAW PUBLIC ATTENTION AWAY FROM INTRACTABLE LEBANESE CRISIS, WHICH MEDIA NOTED HAS FLARED UP ONCE AGAIN. IT STILL TOO EARLY TO TELL WHETHER LEBANON WILL REMAIN ON MEDIA BACK BURNER IN DEFERENCE TO CABINET'S ACTIVITIES.
MURPHY

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